

CD 2011--97

2011-12 SEASON



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF MUSIC

Sunday, November 20, 2011
7:30 pm. Walter Hall

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE

Beverley Johnston, director

Special Guest: Michael Burritt

1. Talk

"Coming Together"

2. Trio per Uno (First Movement)

Nebojsa Zivkovic

Jay Mannion, Alex Artale, Kyle Reyes

3. Twilight

Tobias Brostrom

Jay Mannion, Alejandro Cespedes, Rafael Ponciano, Martin Wigle

4. Khan Variations

Alejandro Vinao

5. Talk

Michael Burritt (marimba soloist)

6. Rounders

Michael Burritt

7. Talk

Michael Burritt (solo marimba), Jonathan Smith, Abby Fisher, Dorian Cox

8. The Offering (also by Michael Burritt)

INTERMISSION

9. "Improvisation"

Michael Burritt, Beverley Johnston, Mark Duggan, Michelle Colton

Coming Together

Frederic Rzewski

10. *Jacob Mannion, Alex Artale, Bruce Chi, Alejandro Cespedes, Rafael Ponciano, Jonathan Smith, Abby Fisher, Dorian Cox, Gregory Oh (piano), Wesley Shen (piano)*

Speaker: Beverley Johnston

Conductor: Michael Burritt

*Many thanks to the Performance Department, University of Toronto, Faculty of Music,
and Zildjian Cymbals for their financial support to make
Michael Burritt's residency possible.*

PROGRAM NOTES

Trio per Uno (1995/1999) consists of three movements. In this performance the performers will play only movement one which is perhaps the most popular. Nebojsa Zivkovic writes of his work (in his broken English!)... 'The "edge" movements have some similarities in manner and appears as if they would present a perfection of wildness in an archaic ritual cult. The first movement requires a bass drum (lying flat) played with timbale sticks by all three players. In addition to that sound, a pair of bongos and china-gongs are used by each players. The claim for playing on the same instrument makes in the music interesting effects of strict unison performed parts which are "abrupt" by the contrasting sounds of other participating instruments. Not to count the brilliant view-effect for the audience in the public performing. Possibility of improvisation in the 1st movement makes the piece more interesting and, at the same time, opens the way for the free streaming of the drum-energy, without any obligation to the "written text".'

Twilight (marimba duo/quartet) by Tobias Brostrom was written in 2001. Tonight the performers will play the quartet version. In this piece, Brostrom focuses on basic ideas of chords and colours transforming, for example in the opening phrase, as chords are passed off from duo to duo. "Twilight" is defined as "the light from the sky between full night and sunrise or between sunset and full night" or simply as "an intermediate state that is not clearly defined". *Twilight* was composed in the summer of 2001 when Brostrom, at age 22, was touring with his duo partner Anders Hassgard. Originally written as a duet, it was later re-scored for marimba quartet. At that time in Brostrom's career, an inner eye for studying composition full time had started to take shape, after already having spent close to 3 years of percussion studies at the Malmo Academy of Music. Brostrom says "The piece attempts the impossible task of making long sustained notes on the marimba... The most important thing when performing this piece is to make all the chords blend. One thing that contributed to writing *Twilight* was that I felt a need to write something more quiet, not just 'beaty stuff'."

Alejandro Vinao writes about his piece **Khan Variations**... "For some years I have listened to the Pakistani singer Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. He was perhaps the greatest exponent of Qawwali, the music of the sufi mystics. This music in general, and Ali Khan's singing in particular, are characterised by remarkable rhythmic and melismatic subtlety. The *Kahn Variations* are a set of 8 rhythmic variations based on a traditional theme from Qawwali music as sang by Ali Kahn. The basic pulse and 'feel' of the music has lingered in my mind ever since I first heard the recording in the early 90's. I developed each of the 8 variations -which are played as a continuous piece- exploring a different rhythmic and melodic aspect of the original theme. However, from the harmonic point of view the piece is rather static, respecting the lack of harmony -in the western sense- of the original traditional theme. As I look at the score now, I can recognise a range of influences from Conlon Nancarrow, tango music,

and my own previous pieces for marimba. All these influences have one thing in common: the articulation of pulse, or multiple simultaneous pulses to create a dramatic musical discourse." *Khan Variations* was jointly commissioned by Bogdan Bacanu, Michael Burritt, Ricardo Gallardo, Eduardo Leandro, Nanae Mimura, William Moersch, Peter Prommel, Gordon Stout, Jack Van Geem, Robert Van Sice, Nancy Zeltsman and Alan Zimmerman, with the assistance of New Music Marimba. Nancy Zeltsman was the "Project Organiser"

Michael Burritt writes about his piece **Rounders**... "I have often thought that performing and amusement park rides hold much in common. For me, there are two distinct sensations that we experience in both scenarios that entice us to take the "ride" time and time again. The physical sensation of the movements of sudden meter change and rhythmic syncopation creates the feeling of "rounding" the corners of a rollercoaster ride where centripetal force pulls our body in all directions. The mental sensation-like that of a game where chance and gambling are involved-is not dissimilar from taking the stage and performing this piece or any other. Think of *Rounders* as a "thrill ride" at the Burritt Amusement Park. No refunds for bruised egos." *Rounders* was commissioned by the 2009 Paris International Marimba Competition and it's director Frederic Macarez.

Bev Johnston writes about **Improvisation**... "It is what it is..."

Taken from the "Incessant Noise" blog here are some thoughts about Frederic Rzewski's masterwork called **Coming Together**... '*Coming Together* by Frederic Rzewski is an extremely simple piece. It's really nothing more than a short text read over a repetitive, fast sequence, much of which is played in unison. But the overall effect it creates is of a very slow build up of tension to an incredible climax after 19 minutes. The text comes from a letter written by Sam Melville, who was an inmate at Attica prison, and was one of the leaders of the 1971 Attica riots, where Melville was killed. The music starts with the piano playing fast rhythmic notes while most of the other instruments playing longer tones over this foundation. Gradually the other instruments start to play faster until they're all playing in a fast, tense unison.' Here is the text... "I think the combination of age and the greater coming together is responsible for the speed of the passing time. It's six months now and I can tell you truthfully few periods in my life have passed so quickly. I am in excellent physical and emotional health. There are doubtless subtle surprises ahead but I feel secure and ready. As lovers will contrast their emotions in times of crisis, so am I dealing with my environment. In the indifferent brutality, incessant noise, the experimental chemistry of food, the ravings of lost hysterical men, I can act with clarity and meaning. I am deliberate--sometimes even calculating--seldom employing histrionics except as a test of the reactions of others. I read much, exercise, talk to guards and inmates, feeling for the inevitable direction of my life."

BIOGRAPHIES

Having performed on four continents and nearly forty states **MICHAEL BURRITT** is one of the World's leading percussion soloists. He is in frequent demand performing concert tours and master classes throughout the United States, Europe, Asia, Australia and Canada. Mr. Burritt has been soloist with the Dallas Wind Symphony, Omaha Symphony, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, Ju Percussion Group (Taiwan), Percussion Art Quartet (Germany), Amores Percussion Group (Spain), Peaux (Sweden) and the Tempus Fugit Percussion Ensemble of Pittsburgh, PA. Mr. Burritt has three solo recordings – *Perpetual*, *Shadow Chasers*, and recently released his third entitled *Waking Dreams* on the Resonator Records label. All the recordings are comprised of Burritt's original compositions as well as works written expressly for him. He has been a featured artist at seven Percussive Arts Society International Conventions. In 1992 he presented his New York solo debut in Weill Hall at Carnegie Hall and in 1998 performed his London debut in the Purcell Room at Queen Elizabeth Hall.

Mr Burritt has extensive chamber and orchestral experience and has performed with the Chicago Chamber Musicians, the Chicago Symphony, the Rembrandt Players, and the the Penninsula Music Festival Orchestra.

Mr. Burritt is also active as a composer, with two concertos to his credit, numerous solo and chamber works for marimba and percussion as well as two books of etudes. His works for solo marimba have become standard repertoire for the instrument and are frequently required repertoire on international competitions. He has been commissioned by The World Marimba Competition in Stuttgart Germany, The Paris International Marimba Competition, Third Coast Percussion Quartet, Exit 9 Percussion, Louisiana State University, the Northshore Concert Band and the Tempus Fugit Percussion Ensemble. Mr. Burritt is published with Ludwig Music, C. Allen and Keyboard Percussion Publications. Burritt is also an artist/clinician and product design/

consultant for Mallettech, where he has developed his own line of signature marimba mallets and an artist / educational clinician with the Zildjian Company. Mr. Burritt is a member of the Percussive Arts Society Board of Directors, a contributing editor for *Percussive Notes* magazine and the chairman of the PAS Keyboard Committee.

Michael Burritt is currently Professor of Percussion and head of the department at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Prior to his appointment at Eastman Mr. Burritt was Professor of Percussion at Northwestern University from 1995–2008 where he developed a program of international distinction. Mr. Burritt received his Bachelor and Master of Music Degrees, as well as the prestigious Performers Certificate from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. His teachers have included John Beck, Gordon Stout, Paul Yancich and Herbert Flower.

BEVERLEY JOHNSTON is one of Canada's leading percussionists, performing, touring and broadcasting a wide array of compositions, both new and old. She is an accomplished orchestral and chamber musician, as well as an internationally celebrated solo touring artist, both in recital and with orchestra. Her exciting performances have been distinguished as non-conventional, effectively combining classical transcriptions, contemporary music and a touch of theatre.

She has released four solo albums: *Impact* (nominated for a JUNO award in 1987) and *Alternate Currents* for the Centrediscs label, *Marimbach* on CBC Records' Musica Viva label and just released her 4th solo recording called *Garden Of Delights* (available through her website).

Since the millennium, Ms. Johnston has been busy with concerto performances and recital programs across North America. Beverley Johnston studied at Vanier College in her native Montreal and at the University of Toronto where she now teaches.